

Brazil succeeds in reducing firearms in civilian hands

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By María Josefina Arce

From 2019 to 2022, the acquisition of firearms in Brazil skyrocketed. The then president Jair Bolsonaro implemented dozens of measures to facilitate the purchase of these devices, a situation that generated

criticism and fear in a good part of the citizenry due to the increase in violence.

In 2022, the last year of Bolsonaro's term in office, the non-governmental organization Brazilian Forum for Public Security estimated that there were more than four million firearms in the hands of civilians in the South American nation at that time.

Official data revealed that firearms licenses increased in Brazilian territory almost seven times during the administration of the former army captain.

In fact, the number of hunters, sport shooters and collectors, who could legally buy dozens of these devices, increased 473% in four years.

And the population's fears were realized. Organized crime, said experts, turned to this group to obtain weapons legally, while at the same time there was an increase in violent incidents and fatal accidents associated with these devices.

The arrival of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to the presidency in January 2023 changed the panorama. The president dismantled the policy of making the use of these devices more flexible, promoted by Bolsonaro.

Last July he signed a decree reducing the number of weapons and ammunition in civilian hands. Another measure increased the rates of the Industrialized Products Tax, which taxes these devices, ammunition and similar devices. Also, according to a report by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, an average of 273 firearms were seized per day in 2023.

The Federal Police points out that there has undoubtedly been a decrease in the number of firearms, thanks to the greater restrictions on their acquisition imposed by the new government.

In addition, the number of homicides in the South American giant fell by 6% last year, compared to 2022. Lula da Silva's arrival at the Planalto Palace put an end to Bolsonaro's irresponsible pretension of turning Brazil into another United States, a country where armed violence has claimed numerous lives and where such events are recorded in schools and other public facilities.

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